Production of tea during the last three years is as under:

Year	Production of tea (in Million'kgs)
2005	945.97
2006 (E)	953.90
2007 (E)	944.68

(E) Estimated and subject to revision.

(d) A Special Purpose Tea Fund has been set up for extending financial assistance by way of long term loan and subsidy for encouraging the tea gardens in taking up large scale uprooting and replanting/rejuvenation of the old age tea bushes. It is targeted to take up replanting and rejuvenation in an area of 2,12,000 hectares spread over for the period of next 15 years.

(e) There is no proposal to set up new gardens. At present there are no tea plantations in Uttar Pradesh.

Security concerns in Indian Ocean

†653. SHRI SHREEGOPAL VYAS: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether security concerns in Indian Ocean are aggravating;

(b) whether Naval officers have expressed their apprehension about L.T.T.E. also;

(c) whether experts have opined that this threat would further enhance after construction of Setusamudram canal; and

(d) the names of countries which are being contacted for modernization of Navy?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K.. ANTONY): (a) to (d) Indian Ocean Region faces security threats on account of territorial disputes, trade and goods movements along sealanes, low intensity maritime threats, economic offences from the sea, etc. There are reports of certain terrorists being imparted training and likelihood of their infiltration through sea routes. However, India's coastal waters are well guarded by Indian Navy and Coast Guard and therefore threat perception of any nature can always be taken care of. In order to meet the modernization requirement of the Indian Navy, procurement/acquisition of items are made from various indigenous as well as foreign sources, including Russia, France, Germany, USA, UK, Israel, etc.

Resentment due to low wages

654. SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Will the Minister of DEFFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is lot of resentment among the armed forces over the issue of lower wages; and

(b) if so, the steps Government has taken to ameliorate the distress?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) and (b) Pay, allowances and other benefits are granted to the Armed Forces Personnel as per Government orders issued from time to time. These are also examined by the Pay Commissions set up by the

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

Government. The Government of India has already appointed the VI Central pay Commission (CPC) to review the structure of pay, allowances and other benefits to the Central Government employees including Armed Forces. The three Services have since submitted a joint memorandum to the Pay Commission regarding service conditions and enhancement of pay and allowances.

Under capacity functioning of Indian Military Academy

655. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in its platinum jubilee year, the Indian Military Academy (IMA), the Army's premier officer training institute is functioning at just over one third of its capacity;

(b) whether it is a fact that there has been a downward trend in the quality of candidates applying for permanent commission over the past decade and it is feared that this dangerous trend can seriously undermine the Army's operational abilities; and

(c) if so, the steps the Government proposes to take to prevent further deterioration?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) The standards of selection of officers' category by the Services Selection Boards have not been diluted.

Training to CPOs and State police forces by Indian Army

656. SHRI VIJAYJ . DARDA:
PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA:
SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Indian Army has been asked to provide training to the Central Police Organizations (CPOs) and State Police forces to tackle Naxal menace;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government would like to deploy Army in the most sensitive areas which are affected by Naxals; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) and (b) The Army within the framework of the Government's counter Naxal Strategy is extending training and advice to Central Police Organisations (CPOs)/State police forces in Naxal affected States. 139 companies of State police forces/CPOs have been trained so far.

(c) and (d) There is no proposal to deploy Army in the Naxal affected areas.

Strategic shift in Defence deals

657. SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that during the last four years, there was a strategic shift in terms of defence deals by Government of India;